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have much weight, since they come from one who is on the whole opposed to the Maccabean theory.

Of the four Psalms considered, the date of the 83d seems the most doubtful. But it not only harmonizes better with the circumstances of this late period than any earlier one, but also with the general spirit which pervades the other Psalms, which it seems more reasonable to refer to the Maccabean times.

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## POST-EXILIC LEGALISM AND POST-EXILIC LITERATURE.

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In the Old Testament discussions of recent years the Psalms have not enjoyed the prominence which has been accorded the Law and the Prophets. For this there were good reasons. The new scheme of the development of the religion of the Old Testament, whatever its merits or demerits may be, is based primarily upon the readjustment of the sources as found in the Pentateuch, and secondarily, upon the bearings of the prophetic writings upon these rearranged sources. According to the new views, the Pentateuch still furnishes the leading *motif* for the unfolding of the religious ideas found in the Old Testament, although it is no longer conceded the historical priority formerly claimed for it. The Psalms, on the other hand, when contrasted with the legal and prophetical writings, did not have a primary importance or bearing upon this reconstruction of Old Testament history and religion, and as the most natural thing in the world, their closer literary and religious study was left to be done when the fundamentals and foundations of the new scheme should have been settled and fixed to the satisfaction of the builders. Recently, though, the work of adjusting the Psalms also to the accepted ideas of Old Testament criticism and theology

has been undertaken. It is chiefly the merit of Professor Cheyne and his Lectures to have brought this problem into the forefront of Old Testament debate. In this respect the English school is outstripping the Germans and the pupils surpassing their masters. Cheyne is entitled to the distinction of being a pioneer and pathfinder in this task, although he is not the first or only one who claims that practically the whole of the collection of the Psalms is post-exilic. That the Psalms constitute the "Hymnbook" of the second temple has been a current claim in German critical circles for years, but not before has so systematic an attempt been made to vindicate in detail this era for these sacred lyrics. That such a date may be and doubtless is demanded by consistency in maintaining the Graf-Wellhausen reconstruction theory, scarcely admits of a doubt. The great question, however, remains, whether the contents of the Psalms are such that they can be explained as the product of a period of the kind and character of the post-exilic. Could such a soil produce such a harvest?

Fortunately the sources for our knowledge of the post-exilic period are, on the whole, excellent and abundant. Some of them we have in the canonical Scriptures themselves. Then come the Apocrypha, the Apocalypses and allied writings, Josephus, Philo, the New Testament, and even the later literature of Judaism. For even if many of these documents were written at a later date, their roots nevertheless reach down to this period, and they present the results of forces and factors that have been operative ever since the Return. The *Pirke Aboth*, for instance, although a part of the Mishnah, is nevertheless a source of the first quality for the study of post-exilic Judaism. These works, all, even those that were edited at a comparatively late date, are all the more valuable, because it is acknowledged on all hands that the general trend and tendency of Jewish spiritual and religious life was the same throughout the post-exilic period. The time is passed when such productions could be regarded merely in the light of curiosities of literature; they are sources of prime value for the investigation of the religious ups and downs in the Israel of this period.

The one controlling factor in this religious life was the nomistic principle. It matters not whether we regard the law as a new or an old thing in Israel in the days of Ezra, certain it is that the law and its observance became for the people the one central thought and aim, and to this one idea was harmonized and adjusted the entire religious thought and life of the nation. To use a word of Deutsch, in his *Literary Remains*, the Jews returned from the captivity a "pilgrim band," that expected from the observance of the Torah the deliverance and prosperity of Israel. This nomism had its beginning in the restoration of Ezra and Nehemiah. The relations between God and his people are determined exclusively by the establishment of the law, and the promise to comply with this law in the establishment of a covenant with God (Ezra 10: 2, 3; Neh. 10: 1sq.). The prayers of Ezra (Ezra 9; Neh. 9) do not close with a petition for pardon, but with a renewed promise to do the deeds of the law, and upon their obedience the hope is based that God will re-establish his former relation to his people. Nehemiah closes his report of his work with the petition that God would remember this work and deal with him accordingly (Neh. 13: 31, cf. vv. 14, 22; 5: 19). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah base, in a one-sided manner, their system upon the law; they practically ignore the prophets. Accordingly post-exilic prophecy in the voice of Malachi cries out against this false position. It passes judgment of condemnation upon the legalistic features of contemporary religious life, and declares that external legal obedience without true regeneration is worthless, leading to hypocrisy. The voice of warning resounds unheard, and the legalistic tendency once operative became all predominant, among the people. Israel becomes a people of the Law. The Law is the Revelation of God (Ez. 9: 13, 14), even prophecy aims to reestablish the Law (Ez. 9: 29); all evil comes from a transgression of the Law (Ez. 9: 34). When Jehovah renews his relations to Israel, this is indeed an act of mercy (Ez. 9: 19, 27, 28, 34) but is conditional upon the people's promise to obey the Law (Ez. 9 and Neh. 9). The prophetic message which demanded faith is crowded back in the consciousness of the people and

supplanted by the legalistic ideal entirely (cf. Weber *Die Lehren des Talmuds*).

Searching a little more closely as to the ideas and ideals which formed the basis of this nomistic principle and the absolute reign of the Law in Israel, it is seen in the conviction that it regulates entirely the relation of God to man, and that strictly, in a juristic sense, God deals strictly with man according to their obedience or disobedience to the law. The principle of salvation by the deeds of the law, which Christ and his apostles, particularly St. Paul, were compelled to combat in so determined a manner, is the keynote of post-exilic Judaism. This demarcation between Christ and the official leaders in Israel in his day was by no means the mushroom growth of a night, but was the result of factors and forces which had been active in the religious development of Israel for centuries, in fact ever since the Exile. Practically the relation between God and man had been reduced to a mathematical problem, in which rewards and punishments were meted out strictly in accordance with the obedience or disobedience of the minutiae of the law. It is not at all surprising that the Messianic idea of the inter-Testament and the New Testament Judaism had degenerated from the high spiritual ideals of Isaiah and had assumed the carnal character as we hear it from the tongues of the Pharisees and Scribes in the New Testament days, and as we find it recorded in such works as the Psalms of Solomon, the Book of Enoch (particularly the first part), and other works of this period. The relation between God and man depending upon the law alone, there was no need of any Messiah or Messianic kingdom other than to establish the people of the Law in their kingdom of earthly splendor to which their obedience would entitle them. The Law from being a means to an end, and that end (to quote St. Paul) the being a schoolmaster to Christ, had become an end in itself, thus everything in the old Prophetic system of Israel's religion had to be readjusted to this new supreme principle, and accordingly, too, post-exilic Judaism is not a further development along national lines of pre-exilic Judaism, but is a new departure and a radical deviation from prophetic teachings. The prophetic ideas of the

covenant, of which trust in the mercy and grace of God was the foundation stone, give way to a purely juristic idea. The covenant is a legal contract, to which both parts and parties are bound to adhere and live. The people is under contract to observe all the minutiae of the law; and in consideration of this, God is under obligation to reward and repay the people in accordance with their fidelity. This applies to both the individual and to the nation. Work and wages are in exact relation and correspondence to each other. He who does much receives great rewards. And to make matters worse, this observance is conceived entirely as an external matter. This formalistic feature of post-exilic Judaism is no more than the natural outcome of such a principle. The hope for pay and reward is the prime motive of obeying the law. The deeper ideas of love to God, obedience to him and of gratitude; of spiritual factors in religious life and work, practically disappear from the life of Israel. To use the words of Schürer (*Geschichte der Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christ*, Vol. II. p. 389 sq.), the entire religious life of the Jewish people of the New Testament era centers around the two poles of obedience to the law and the hope of future reward based upon this obedience. Only the external act, and never the quality of the act, came into consideration. The views combated by the New Testament present fully and completely the character of the Jewish religious life of the post-exilic era (cf. Weber, l. c. §59, p. 267).

That this presentation of this religious trend and tendency of this age is amply authenticated by reliable sources can be seen by a reference to the literature of the period. It is true that the formal injunction to obey the Law is not found as often as one might suppose and expect. But the fact of the matter is, that it is regarded as self-evident that this, and this alone, is the cardinal principle of the entire religious system. Judas the Maccabean, (1 Macc. 3: 21) says significantly, "We fight for our lives and for our Law" (cf. also 1 Macc. 6: 29, and 2 Macc. 7: 2, 23, 30, 37). The entire cycle of wisdom ideas found in Jesus Sirach and other apocrypha is based upon this principle, and the same is true of the Book of Enoch, the Jewish parts of the Sibylline Oracles, the Psalms

of Solomon and the remainder of inter-Testament literature. All are nomistic to the core.

Can the Psalter be the product of such a period and such an age? Is it not significant that the New Testament so frequently quotes the Psalter against the teachings of its day, which teachings were the best expression of the outcome of this thought of the entire period? Again, is it not significant that in the entire post-exilic literature there is so exceedingly little evidence that the Psalms had any marked influence on the development of religious thought? The favorite phrase that it was the "Hymnbook of the Second Temple" is a *mot* and that is all; it has no support in contemporary literature. And again, is it possible that the Psalms, with their naturally different views on such fundamental subjects as the relation of God to man, the covenant, sin, transgression, pardon, and so forth, could have originated in this period? It is about as probable as that tropical plants will bloom in Labrador. The Psalms could not have been the Hymnbook of the Second Temple, simply because its theology does not reflect the spirit and contents of the theology of the Second Temple. They differ not only in degree, but in kind and *toto coelo*. Post-exilic Judaism had little use for such ideas as we have in the Psalms, particularly in regard to such subjects as sin, and pardon, and mercy. While in itself there is nothing culpable in declaring the Psalms exilic or post-exilic, and while the one or the other may be Maccabean even, yet as a collection of sacred lyrics their thoughts and teachings could, under no circumstances, have originated in the post-exilic era. The desert of Sahara does not produce the vine and the fig.